

LESSON



THE ART OF EMPATHY

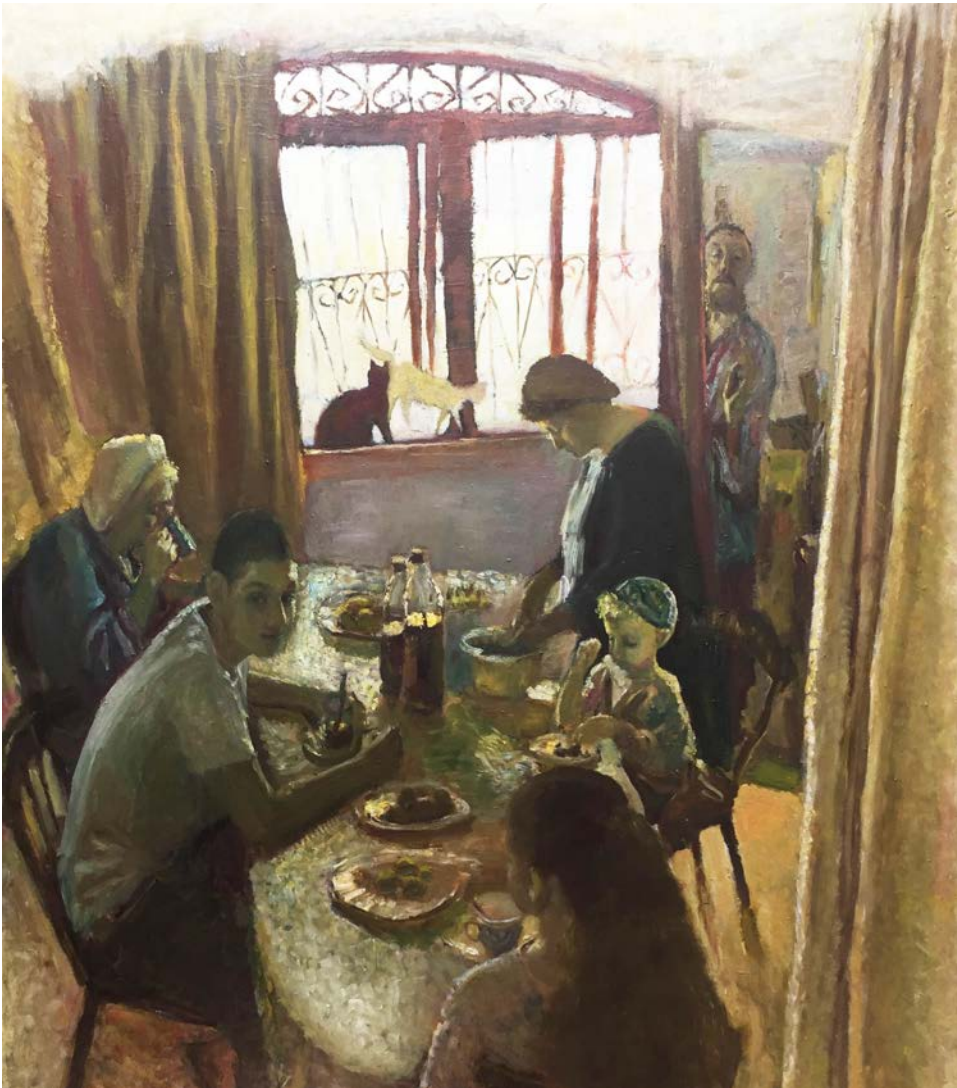
Empathy is the cornerstone of meaningful connections, allowing us to truly understand and support those around us. How can we cultivate a deeper sense of empathy in our daily interactions?

GIRLS IN TSFAT

Nahum Gutman, silkscreen
print on paper, Safed, Israel

I. COURSE INTRODUCTION

Life is interlaced with relationships. It is only natural that we constantly seek to develop and improve them. This course explores the remarkable assistance that Judaism's teachings provide for upgrading all forms of human relationships.



THE ARTIST'S FAMILY
Leonid Balaklav, oil on canvas,
2015, Israel



TEXT 1

No to Loneliness

Genesis 2:18

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהִים: לֹא טוֹב הָיְתָה
הָאָדָם לְבֶדּוֹ, אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ.

G-d* said, “It is not good for the human to be alone;
I shall make for him a corresponding counterpart.”

*Throughout this book, “G-d” and “L-rd” are written with a hyphen instead of an “o” (both in our own translations and when quoting others). This is one way we accord reverence to the sacred Divine name. This also reminds us that, even as we seek G-d, He transcends any human effort to describe His reality.



JEWISH WEDDING
Issachar Ber Ryback
(Ukraine, 1897-1937), oil
on board, c. 1930, Paris



EXERCISE 1.1

Identify three typical relationship stressors. Try to encapsulate each of these in just a word or two:

1.

2.

3.



TEXT 2

Acquire a Friend

Mishnah, Avot 1:6

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן פְּרַחְיָה אוֹמֵר: עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רֵב,
וּקְנֵה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהוֹי דָן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת.

Yehoshua ben Perachyah would say, “Appoint a teacher for yourself, acquire a friend for yourself, and judge all people favorably.”

AVOT
(*ETHICS OF THE FATHERS; PIRKEI AVOT*)

A 6-chapter work on Jewish ethics that is studied widely by Jewish communities, especially during the summer. The first 5 chapters are from the Mishnah, tractate Avot. Avot differs from the rest of the Mishnah in that it does not focus on legal subjects; it is a collection of the sages’ wisdom on topics related to character development, ethics, healthy living, piety, and the study of Torah.



THE CITY SCENE
H. Weiss, oil on canvas

**FIGURE 1.1**

Beliefs Predict Participation

Nancy E. Newall, et al., "Causal Beliefs, Social Participation, and Loneliness among Older Adults: A Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 26:2-3 (March/May 2009), pp. 273-290

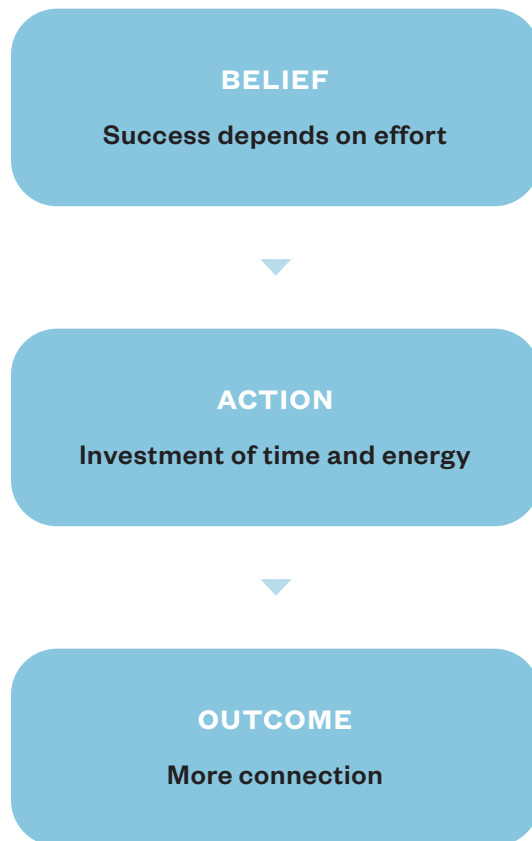
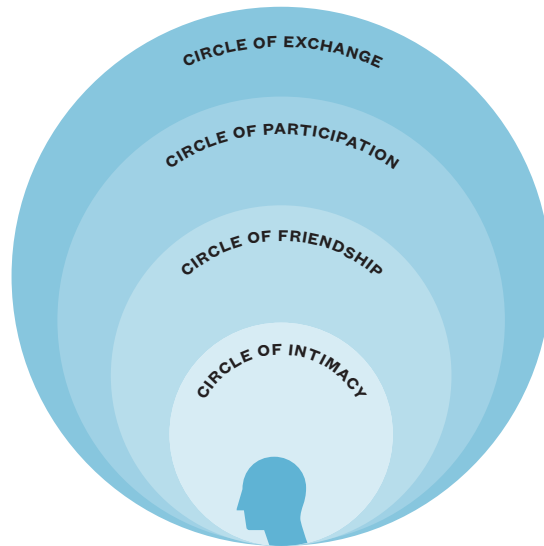




FIGURE 1.2

Circles of Support

Judith Snow, *What's Really Worth Doing and How to Do It: A Book for People Who Love Someone Labeled Disabled (Possibly Yourself)* (Toronto: Inclusion Press, 1994)



THE CIRCLE OF INTIMACY

The people you know well and spend much time interacting with, often at home. You trust these people with the most personal parts of your life. You can't imagine your life without them.

THE CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP

The people who are close to you but not intimately. You share with them your dreams, good news, and troubles.

THE CIRCLE OF PARTICIPATION

The people you interact with frequently: at work, religious services, neighborhood groups, or clubs.

THE CIRCLE OF EXCHANGE

The people paid to be in your life: a doctor, therapist, or hairdresser.

II. SOUL CONNECTION

“Whatever you find hateful when done to you, do not do to your fellow.” A foremost Talmudic sage presented this as “the entire Torah.” A perplexing statement, perhaps, but a deeper exploration of the two spirits within each person—and their contradictory approaches to relationships—will provide a powerful soul-based understanding of this teaching that revolutionizes how we approach relationships.



TEXT 3A

The Golden Rule

Talmud, Shabbat 31a

אָמַר לוֹ: דַּעְלָךְ סְנִי לַחֲבֵרְךָ לֹא תַעֲבִיד.
זוֹ הִיא כָּל הַתּוֹרָה בְּלָהּ, וְאֵיךְ פְּרוּשָׁה הוּא, זֵיל גְּמֹר.

Hillel told him, “Whatever you find hateful when done to you, do not do to your fellow. This is all of Torah in its entirety; the rest is commentary. Go study the rest!”

BABYLONIAN TALMUD

A literary work of monumental proportions that draws upon the legal, spiritual, intellectual, ethical, and historical traditions of Judaism. The 37 tractates of the Babylonian Talmud contain the teachings of the Jewish sages from the period after the destruction of the 2nd Temple through the 5th century CE. It has served as the primary vehicle for the transmission of the Oral Law and the education of Jews over the centuries; it is the entry point for all subsequent legal, ethical, and theological Jewish scholarship.



ON ONE FOOT
Shoshana Brombacher,
pastel and ink on paper,
2008, Germany



TEXT 3B

Two Interpretations

Rashi, ad loc.

”רַעַה וְרַע אָבִיךָ אֶל תַּעֲזֹב” (מִשְׁלֵי כז, י) - זָה
 הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. אֶל תַּעֲבֹר עַל דְּבָרָיו, שְׁהָרִי
 עֲלֶיךָ שְׁנֵאוֹי שִׁיעֲבֹר חֲבִירָךְ עַל דְּבָרֶיךָ.
 לִישָׁנָא אַחֲרֵינָא: חֲבִירָךְ מִמֶּשׁ, כְּגוֹן גְּזֵלָה,
 גְּנֵבָה, נִיאוּף, וְרֵב הַמִּצְוֹת.

G-d is referred to in the Scriptures as our “fellow,” as in the verse, “Do not forsake your Fellow and your father’s Fellow” (PROVERBS 27:10). Hillel intended that we should not disregard G-d’s wishes, for we hate it when our Fellow ignores our wishes.

An alternate interpretation: Hillel referred quite literally to our fellow humans, indicating the need to avoid robbery, theft, and adultery, and to obey the numerous other interpersonal *mitzvot*.

**RABBI
 SHLOMO YITZCHAKI
 (RASHI)
 1040-1105**

Most noted biblical and Talmudic commentator. Born in Troyes, France, Rashi studied in the famed *yeshivot* of Mainz and Worms. His commentaries on the Pentateuch and the Talmud, which focus on the straightforward meaning of the text, appear in virtually every edition of the Talmud and Bible.

**EXERCISE 1.2**

As a rule, Rashi provides a single explanation or interpretation. When he offers two, it is because each interpretation carries a unique disadvantage.

Together with a partner, analyze and discuss the precise wording of Hillel's statement and try to identify the difficulty with each of Rashi's explanations.

**THE DIFFICULTY WITH
THE FIRST EXPLANATION:**

**THE DIFFICULTY WITH
THE SECOND EXPLANATION:**



TEXT 4

Two Conflicting Spirits

Ecclesiastes 3:21

מִי יוֹדֵעַ, רוּחַ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם הָעֹלָה הִיא לְמַעַלָּה,
וְרוּחַ הַבְּהֵמָה הַיֹּרֶדֶת הִיא לְמַטָּה לָאָרֶץ.

How many understand that the spirit of the human ascends on high while the spirit of the beast descends to the earth?



I AND THE VILLAGE
Marc Chagall, oil on canvas, 1911
(Museum of Modern Art, New York)

ECCLESIASTES

Biblical book. Written by King Solomon, Ecclesiastes is part of the Writings (Ketuvim) section of the Tanach. Addressing the existential question of the meaning of life, Ecclesiastes exposes the futility of materialism, concluding that Divine worship and mitzvah observance is the only true meaning of life. This book is traditionally read in many communities during the holiday of Sukkot.



Rabbi Manis Friedman:

Does the natural soul want to sin, or is it after something more primal?
myjli.com/relationships



TEXT 5

The Inner Battle

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya, Likutei Amarim*, ch. 9

וּכְמוֹ שְׁשֵׁנֵי מְלָכִים נִלְחָמִים עַל עִיר אַחַת, שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד רוֹצֵה
לְכַבֵּשׁהּ וְלִמְלֹךָ עָלֶיהָ, דְּהֵינּוּ לְהִנְהִיג יוֹשְׁבֵיהָ כְּרֻצּוֹנוֹ,
וְשִׂיחֵיו סָרִים לְמִשְׁמַעְתּוֹ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר יִגְזֹר עָלֵיהֶם.

כָּף שְׂתֵי הַנְּפָשׁוֹת, הָאֱלֹקִית וְהַחַיּוֹנִית הַבְּהִמִית
שֶׁמִּהֲקַלְפָּהּ, נִלְחָמוֹת זוֹ עִם זוֹ עַל הַגּוּף וְכָל אַבְרָיו.

Imagine two kings locked in battle, each
desperate to gain control over the same city,
rule its inhabitants according to his will, and
ensure that they obey his every decree.

That same battle rages within each of us,
between our two souls. Our G-dly soul
and its rival the animalistic soul wage war
over our bodies and all its limbs.

**RABBI SHNEUR
ZALMAN OF LIADI
(ALTER REBBE)
1745-1812**

Chasidic rebbe, Halachic authority, and founder of the Chabad movement. The Alter Rebbe was born in Liozna, Belarus, and was among the principal students of the Magid of Mezeritch. His numerous works include the *Tanya*, an early classic containing the fundamentals of Chabad Chasidism; and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, an expanded and reworked code of Jewish law.

SIDDUR

The siddur is the Jewish prayer book. It was originally developed by the sages of the Great Assembly in the 4th century BCE and later reconstructed by Rabban Gamliel after the destruction of the Second Temple. Various authorities continued to add prayers, from then until contemporary times. It includes praise of G-d, requests for personal and national needs, selections from the Bible, and much else. Various Jewish communities have slightly different versions of the siddur.



TEXT 6

Primary vs. Secondary

Siddur, Morning Blessings

אֱלֹקִי, נְשָׁמָה שִׁנְתָּתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא.

My G-d, the soul You placed within me is pure.



TEXT 7

Soul Arithmetic

Rabbi Dovber of Lubavitch, cited in *Hayom Yom*, 20 Tevet

אַז איינער רעדט מיט דעם אַנדערען בעניני
עבודה און זיי לערנען צוזאמען, איז דאס צוויי
נפֿש אַלקית אויף איין נפֿש הטבעית.

When two people discuss spiritual growth
and study Torah together, there are two
G-dly souls against one natural soul.

**RABBI DOVBER
OF LUBAVITCH
(MITELER REBBE)
1773-1827**

Rabbi Dovber was the eldest son of and successor to Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi and greatly expanded upon and developed his father's groundbreaking teachings. He was the 1st Chabad rebbe to live in the village of Lubavitch. Dedicated to the welfare of Russian Jewry, at that time confined to the Pale of Settlement, he established Jewish agricultural colonies. His most notable works on Chasidic thought include *Shaar Hayichud*, *Torat Chayim*, and *Imrei Binah*.



THE DOORS OF BINAH
Esther Pam Zibell



TEXT 8

The Baron and the Pike

Rabbi Adin Even-Yisrael (Steinsaltz), *Simple Words*
(New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), pp. 190–191

There is a Jewish folktale that illustrates how vague the meaning of the word “love” can be, and also demonstrates some of the basic problems in statements such as “I love you.”

Once upon a time, a fisherman caught a large pike, and when he pulled the fish out of the water and saw its size, he said, “This is wonderful! I’ll take it to the Baron; he loves pike.”

The poor fish says to himself, “There’s some hope for me yet.”

The fisherman brings the fish to the manor house, and the guard says, “What do you have?”

“A pike.”

“Great,” says the guard. “The Baron loves pike.”

The fish feels that there is some corroboration of the facts.

The fisherman enters the palace, and though the fish can hardly breathe, he still has hope: the Baron loves pike. He is brought into the kitchen, and all the cooks exclaim how much the Baron loves pike. The fish is placed on a table, and the

**RABBI ADIN EVEN-ISRAEL
(STEINSALTZ)
1937–2020**

Talmudist, author, and philosopher. Rabbi Steinsaltz is considered one of the foremost Jewish thinkers of the 20th century. A resident of Jerusalem, Rabbi Steinsaltz was the founder of the Israel Institute for Talmudic Publications, a society dedicated to the translation and elucidation of the Talmud, and he authored numerous works about the Talmud and Jewish mysticism. Praised by *Time* magazine as a “once-in-a-millennium scholar,” he was awarded the Israel Prize for his contributions to Jewish study.

Baron himself enters and gives instructions, “Cut off the tail, cut off the head, and slit it this way.”

With his last breath, the fish cries out in great despair, “Why did you lie? You don’t love pike, you love yourself!”



TEXT 9

The Soul of the Torah

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya, Likutei Amarim*, ch. 32

וְזֶהוּ שְׂאֵמֵר הַלֵּל הַזֶּקֶן עַל קִיּוּם מִצְוָה זוֹ:
 “זֶהוּ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָהּ, וְאִדָּךְ פְּרוּשָׂא הוּא כו’.”

כִּי יְסוּד וְשִׁרְשׁ כָּל הַתּוֹרָה הוּא לְהַגְבִּיחַ
 וְלְהַעֲלוֹת הַנְּפֶשׁ עַל הַגּוּף.

This is what Hillel the Elder meant when he stated regarding the mitzvah to love your fellow, “This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary,” etc.

For the foundation and root of the entire Torah is to prioritize and raise the Divine soul over the body.

III. EMBRACING EMPATHY

Torah sources discuss distinct internal experiences upon which modern psychology has bestowed the respective terms *cognitive empathy* and *affective empathy*.

Cognitive empathy is the ability to recognize and understand another person's emotions. Affective empathy (sometimes referred to as emotional empathy) involves having a matching or corresponding emotional reaction to the feelings of another individual.



TEXT 10A

Joseph and the Chamberlains

Genesis 40:5–8

וַיַּחְלְמוּ חֲלוֹם שְׁנֵיהֶם, אִישׁ חֲלָמוֹ בְּלֵילָה אֶחָד,
 אִישׁ כְּפִתְרוֹן חֲלָמוֹ, הַמְשָׁקָה וְהָאֶפֶה אֲשֶׁר
 לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר אֶסְוֵרִים בְּבַיִת הַסֵּהר.
 וַיָּבֹא אֲלֵיהֶם יוֹסֵף בְּבֹקֶר, וַיֵּרָא אֹתָם וְהֵנָּם זֹעֲפִים.
 וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת סְרִיסֵי פְרַעֲהָ אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּמִשְׁמֶרֶת
 בַּיִת אֲדֹנָיו לֵאמֹר, מַדּוּעַ פָּנִיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם.
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו, חֲלוֹם חֲלָמְנוּ וּפְתָר אֵין אֵתוֹ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ
 אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף, הֲלוֹא לְאֵלֵקִים פְּתָרָנִים, סִפְרוּ נָא לִי.

Each of them—the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were imprisoned in the dungeon—dreamed a dream; each

one had his dream on the same night, and each dream had its own meaning.

Joseph came to them in the morning and saw them—they looked disturbed.

He questioned Pharaoh's chamberlains, who were with him in the prison of his master's house, asking, "Why are your faces poorly today?"

They told him, "We dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter for it."

Joseph responded to them, "Do interpretations not belong to G-d? Tell them now to me."



TEXT 10B

Joseph's Daily Empathy

Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, ad loc.

וְאָמַר מִלַּת "הַיּוֹם" - כְּלוּמַר, עִם הַיּוֹתוֹ מִן הַדִּין שֶׁלְהִיּוֹתְכֶם
אֲסוּרִים יִהְיֶה לְכֶם לֵב רַע וּפְנִים נִזְעָמִים, הִנֵּה לְפִי שֶׁרְאִיתִי
שְׁנֵי לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַל שֶׁאַר הַיָּמִים שֶׁהֵייתֶם אֲסוּרִים, לָכֵן אֶשְׁאַל.

Joseph specified "today." Joseph understood and expected that individuals suffering incarceration would be in a foul mood and look glum. However, he asked because he noticed a distinction between that specific day and every prior day of their incarceration.

**RABBI DON YITZCHAK
ABARBANEL**
1437-1508

Biblical exegete and statesman. Abarbanel was born in Lisbon, Portugal, and served as a minister in the court of King Alfonso V of Portugal. After intrigues at court led to accusations against him, he fled to Spain, where he once again served as a counselor to royalty. It is claimed that Abarbanel offered King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella large sums of money for the revocation of their Edict of Expulsion of 1492, but to no avail. After the expulsion, he eventually settled in Italy, where he wrote a commentary on Scripture, as well as other venerated works.



TEXT 11

Cognitive and Emotive Empathy

Brené Brown, *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience* (New York: Random House, 2021), pp. 120–121

Empathy, the most powerful tool of compassion, is an emotional skill set that allows us to understand what someone is experiencing and to reflect back that understanding. . . .

Most researchers agree that there are at least two elements to empathy: cognitive empathy and affective empathy.

Cognitive empathy, sometimes called perspective taking or mentalizing, is the ability to recognize and understand another person's emotions.

Affective empathy, often called experience sharing, is one's own emotional attunement with another person's experience.

BRENÉ BROWN
1965-

Social worker and author. A native of Texas, Brené Brown received her PhD in social work from the University of Houston, where she currently serves as a professor. She is the author of a number of self-help books and is known for her work on topics of shame, vulnerability, and leadership.



Why do we need a natural soul? Doesn't it just take us away from G-d? **Rabbi Shais Taub** explains. myjli.com/relationships



TEXT 12

Empathy at All Costs

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson,
Torat Menachem 5734:1 (74), pp. 365–366

וְלְכַאוּרָה: כִּיּוֹן שְׂיוֹסָף הָיָה בְּמִצְבַּ כְּזֶה שֶׁגֶרְמוּ לוֹ עוֹל הַכִּי
גְדוֹל בְּכֹן שֶׁמְכַרוּהוּ לְמִצְרַיִם, וּבְמִצְרַיִם גּוֹפָא . . . שָׁמוּ
אוֹתוֹ בְּבֵית הַסֵּהר לְלֹא עוֹן בְּכַפּוֹ - הָרִי מְטַבֵּעַ הַדְּבָרִים הָיָה
צָרִיף לְהֵיּוֹת מְאוּכָזֵב וּמְמוּרָמָר, "בְּרוּגְז עַל הָעוֹלָם" . . .
וְאֵף עַל פִּי כּוֹן, בְּרֵאוֹתוֹ בְּבֵית הַסֵּהר אֶת סְרִיסֵי פְרָעָה,
שֶׁר הַמְשָׁקִים וְשֶׁר הָאוֹפִים, "שִׁי הֵנָּם זוֹעֲפִים" - פְּנָה
אֲלֵיהֶם וְשָׂאל אוֹתָם: "מִדּוּעַ פְּנִיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם"? . . .

וְהַהִסְבְּרָה בְּזֶה: יוֹסֵף הָיָה מְזֻרְעוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם "אֲשֶׁר
יִצְוֶה אֶת בְּנָיו וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט"
(בְּרֵאוֹשֵׁית יח, יט) . . . וְלָכֵן בְּרֵאוֹתוֹ בְּרֵיָה שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּמַעֲמָד וּמִצְבָּ שֶׁאֵינּוּ בְּשִׁמְחָה - תְּמוּנַת
זֶה שֶׁצָּרִיף לְהֵיּוֹת בְּשִׁמְחָה מִצַּד עֵצָם עוֹבְדַת הַיּוֹתוֹ
בְּרֵיָה שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁזֹּהִי תְּכֵלִית הַשְּׁלֹמוֹת
- הַיְנָה כִּיּוֹן שֶׁהוּא רָאָה זֹאת, הָרִי זוֹ הוֹכְחָה שֶׁזֶהוּ עֲנִין
הַשְּׂרִיף אֲלָיו, וְלָכֵן מִיָּד הַשְּׁתַּדֵּל לְנִסּוֹת לַעֲזוֹר.

Joseph had been made to suffer the greatest injustices. He was sold as a slave in Egypt and . . . then jailed without guilt. One might have expected him to be embittered, angry at the world. . . . Nevertheless, when he noticed that Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and baker looked unusually distraught, he approached them and inquired, "Why are your faces poorly today?" . . .

**RABBI MENACHEM
MENDEL SCHNEERSON
1902-1994**

The towering Jewish leader of the 20th century, known as "the Lubavitcher Rebbe," or simply as "the Rebbe." Born in southern Ukraine, the Rebbe escaped Nazi-occupied Europe, arriving in the U.S. in June 1941. The Rebbe inspired and guided the revival of traditional Judaism after the European devastation, impacting virtually every Jewish community the world over. The Rebbe often emphasized that the performance of just one additional good deed could usher in the era of Mashiach. The Rebbe's scholarly talks and writings have been printed in more than 200 volumes.

Joseph descended from Abraham, regarding whom G-d proclaimed that “he would command his children and his household after him to keep G-d’s ways by doing righteousness and justice” (GENESIS 18:19). . . . Consequently, upon seeing one of G-d’s creatures in a mood quite the contrary of joyful (after all, the mere recognition that a person is a creation of the Holy One should be sufficient cause for joy), Joseph took the fact that the matter had caught his attention as evidence that the matter was relevant to him. Therefore, he immediately sought to be of assistance.



JOSEPH'S BROTHERS
THROW HIM INTO THE PIT
Yoram Raanan, Israel



TEXT 13

Understand the Needy

Midrash Tehilim 41

“אֲשֶׁרִי מִשְׁפִּיל אֶל דָּל” (תהלים מא, ב): . . .
 מהו “משפיל”? שִׁמְסִתְּכֶל וְחֹשֵׁב עָלָיו הֵי אֵהָ לְהַחֲיוֹתוֹ.
 כִּיצַד? אִם הָיָה אָדָם גָּדוֹל וַיִּוֹרֵד מִנְּכֶסֶיו, הוּא הוֹלֵךְ
 אֶצְלוֹ וְאוֹמֵר לוֹ: שְׁמַעְתִּי שִׁירוּשָׁה בָּאָה לְךָ בְּמִקוֹם
 פְּלוֹנִי, וְשַׁחֲיִיב לְךָ אִישׁ פְּלוֹנִי כָּה וְכָה, אִם רְצוֹנָה
 טוֹל מִמֶּנִּי, וְלִכְשֶׁתִּגִּיעַ לְיָדְךָ אוֹתָהּ הִירָשָׁה, אוֹ
 כְּשִׁיפְרַע לְךָ אִישׁ פְּלוֹנִי חוֹבָה, אֲתָה פּוֹרַע לִי.
 זֶהוּ “מִשְׁפִּיל אֶל דָּל”.

“Praised be one who understands those who are in need” (PSALMS 41:2). . . .

What does “understand” mean in this context? It refers to one who carefully considers and reflects on a strategy to sustain the person in need.

For example, when a wealthy person faces a drastic downturn, the understanding benefactor visits the formerly wealthy person and says, “I heard that an inheritance will be coming your way in such-and-such a location and that so-and-so owes you money. If you wish, accept this sum from me, and when that inheritance comes to you, or when that debtor repays the debt, you can pay me back.”

This person *understands* those who are in need.

MIDRASH TEHILIM

A rabbinic commentary on the book of Psalms. Midrash is the designation of a particular genre of rabbinic literature usually forming a running commentary on specific books of the Bible. This particular Midrash provides textual exegeses and develops and illustrates the principles of the book of Psalms.



TEXT 14A

Two Methods for Anxiety

Talmud, Yoma 75a

רַבִּי אָמִי וְרַבִּי אֲסִי:

חַד אָמַר: יִשְׁחָנָה מִדַּעְתּוֹ.

וְחַד אָמַר: יִשְׁחָנָה לְאַחֵרִים.

Rabbis Ami and Asi each suggested a method for handling anxiety:

One said, “Cast it from the mind.”

The other said, “Speak it over with others.”



ECHOES OF EMPATHY

Edith Torres, acrylic on canvas, 2023, Texas



TEXT 14B

“Others” Qualified

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch,
cited in *Hayom Yom*, 25 Sivan

”לאחרים” רק בגוף.

אבל מאוחדים אתו עמו.

שמרגישים את ענינו.

They are “others” only in the bodily sense.

However, they are wholly united with you.

For they feel your reality.

**RABBI MENACHEM
MENDEL OF LUBAVITCH
(TZEMACH TZEDEK)
1789-1866**

Chasidic rebbe and noted author. The *Tzemach Tzedek* was the 3rd leader of the Chabad Chasidic movement and a noted authority on Jewish law. His numerous works include Halachic responsa, Chasidic discourses, and kabbalistic writings. Active in the communal affairs of Russian Jewry, he worked to alleviate the plight of the cantonists, Jewish children kidnapped to serve in the czar’s army. He passed away in Lubavitch, leaving 7 sons and 2 daughters.



TEXT 15

A Tale of Emotional Empathy

Rabbi Yehudah ben Shmuel Hachasid, *Sefer Chasidim* 434

מעשה באדם אחד שהיה נוהג בעצמו כשהיה אדם אצל,

היה חוזר לביתו בלא מנעלים להצטער עם האבל.

והיה אותו יום שמת בו יום שנקבצו כל הקהילות

לאותו העיר, ויום ט' באב היה. והלכו הכל יחפים.

והראה הקדוש ברוך הוא שהטוב והישר בעיניו

עשה, אף על פי שלא הוצרך לעשות.

**RABBI YEHUDAH BEN
SHMUEL HACHASID
1140-1217**

Mystic and ethicist. Born in Speyer, Germany, he was a rabbi, mystic, and one of the initiators of Chasidei Ashkenaz, a Jewish German moralist movement that stressed piety and asceticism. Rabbi Yehudah settled in Regensburg in 1195. He is best known for his work *Sefer Chasidim*, on the ethics of day-to-day concerns.

There was an incident concerning a man with a unique custom: whenever a member of his community would return [from the burying] of a loved one, this fellow accompanied the mourner home without shoes—to share in the pain of the mourner [who wasn't wearing shoes, as the prescribed expression of intense mourning].

When he passed away, it happened to be an occasion for which Jewish communities from the surrounding areas gathered in his city—for the day of his passing was the ninth of Av [the annual day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple, when Jews refrain from wearing leather footwear]. And so it happened that *everyone* was without shoes on the day of his death.

With this, G-d publicly demonstrated that he had acted appropriately and admirably, though he had no obligation to act that way.



What characteristic made Moses the greatest Jewish leader who ever lived? Discover the answer with **Rabbi Moshe Bryski**.
myjli.com/relationships

IV. PRACTICING EMPATHY

Harmonizing soul consciousness with tangible recommendations serves as a potent formula to introduce more empathy into our relationships.



FIGURE 1.3

Empathy Misses

Brené Brown, *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience* (New York: Random House, 2021), pp. 126–127

	EXAMPLES
SYMPATHY VS. EMPATHY	I feel sorry for you.
JUDGMENT	You <i>should</i> feel shame.
DISAPPOINTMENT	You've let me down.
DISCHARGING DISCOMFORT WITH BLAME	This feels terrible. Who can we blame? You?
MINIMIZE/AVOID	Let's make this go away.
COMPARING/COMPETING	If you think that's bad!
SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER	Don't upset people or make them uncomfortable.
ADVICE GIVING/PROBLEM SOLVING	I can fix this and I can fix you.

V. CONCLUSION

For the above insights to be valuable, they require grounding in our personal realities.



EXERCISE 1.3

1. **Consider some of your recent interactions.**
Identify an individual who displayed a high level of empathy and record what it was in particular that demonstrated this:

2. **Consider two individuals with whom you have a relationship (family, friends, coworkers, etc.).**
Identify the types of practical behaviors you might engage in for the sake of infusing greater empathy into the relationship:

Relationship 1:

Relationship 2:

KEY POINTS

- 1 At times, we are tempted to attribute relationship success to something beyond our control. However, the Mishnah directs us to *acquire* a friend, implying that meaningful relationships do not simply *happen to us*; we can and must *make them happen*.
- 2 We each have two souls within ourselves. Our self-oriented soul is naturally apathetic to others, while our G-dly soul naturally desires to connect with others, sensing itself and others as part of a larger whole.
- 3 The apathetic animal soul has a firmer grip on the average person's consciousness. Engaging in relationships and friendships requires *transcending* the animal self, allowing the G-dly soul to shine.
- 4 To be in a genuine relationship with another implies being in touch with the Divine soul. As such, human connection is not a mere physical or emotional need but an authentic spiritual experience.

- 5 The factors that led us into a relationship are not critical; it is common for relationships to begin with self-interest in mind. What *is* critical is to grow and advance past a self-serving mindset.
- 6 Cognitive and emotional empathy are crucial for our relationships. Cognitive empathy is the ability to recognize and understand another person's emotions and to communicate this with the other. Affective empathy is experiencing a matching or corresponding emotional reaction to the emotions of another individual.
- 7 It can be challenging to unleash empathy consistently, especially when preoccupied. The more in tune we are with our G-dly soul, the easier time we will have in connecting through empathy.

Empathy Explored: The Science and Significance of Understanding Others



Empathy is a fundamental feature of human connection. Despite its importance, empathy is often misunderstood and underappreciated. This selection of expert insights explores several dimensions of empathy, ranging from its definition and benefits to the challenges and factors influencing its development. These insights provide us with a more robust appreciation for the role of empathy in our relationships and, when applied, facilitate deeper and more meaningful connections with the people that surround us.

Positive Empathy

Empathy is defined as the psychological process of sharing and understanding another person's emotions. Despite this neutral definition, empathy is often associated with how we relate to people who are *suffering* rather than how we relate to those who are having *positive* experiences. This creates a disparity between empathy's formal definition and its common use. This is yet another expression of negativity bias.

See Paul Rozin and Edward B. Royzman, "Negativity Bias, Negativity Dominance, and Contagion," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 5:4 (2001), pp. 308–309

Enticing Greater Empathy

In one study, participants were randomly divided into groups. The participants of one group were told that they would be receiving monetary payments according to how accurately they inferred the thoughts and feelings of others, while the other group was not provided with an incentive. Empathic accuracy in the paid group was significantly higher than in the unpaid group, with men and women performing equally well, suggesting "that greater empathic accuracy can be achieved by virtually anyone who is given the proper motivation."

See Kristi J. K. Klein and Sara D. Hodges, "Gender Differences, Motivation, and Empathic Accuracy: When It Pays to Understand," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27:6 (2001), pp. 720–730

The Mindset Effect

We fail at empathy when we find it difficult or distressing to relate to others. What might compel us to try harder to empathize in tough situations? Multiple studies found that individuals who believe empathy can be developed (a malleable mindset) invest greater effort into being empathetic in challenging scenarios, compared to individuals who believe that personal empathy levels are a fixed feature of personality and cannot be changed. The data suggests "that people's mindsets powerfully affect whether they exert effort to empathize when it is needed most."

See Karina Schumann, et al., "Addressing the Empathy Deficit: Beliefs about the Malleability of Empathy Predict Effortful Responses When Empathy Is Challenging," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107:3 (2014), pp. 475–493

Benefiting Relationships

Greater empathic accuracy appears to help close relationships when:

- » Perceivers use it to identify their partner’s current need for support and how to provide the particular type and amount of instrumental support that the partner currently desires;
- » Perceivers use it preemptively to anticipate and avoid conflicts with the partner and to solve small problems before they turn into larger ones;
- » Perceivers use it to “stay on the same page” with the partner, applying the same interpretive frame to the current situation and tracking the changes in the frames that the partner applies;
- » Perceivers use it to put the partner’s “bad behavior” into perspective, to recognize the partner’s mixed motives, to identify mutually acceptable ways to resolve conflicts with the partner, and to depart from immediate self-interest for the good of the partner and the relationship; and
- » Perceivers use it to effectively align and coordinate their own goals with the partner’s goals.

William Ickes and Sara D. Hodges, “Empathic Accuracy in Close Relationships,” in J. A. Simpson and L. Campbell (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Close Relationships* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 365–366

Empathy Erosion

A 2011 meta-analysis revealed a decline in empathic concern and perspective taking among American college students, noting a significant decrease from 2000 to 2010. Compared to the 1970s and 1980s, college students were less likely to agree with statements such as “I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me” and “I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.” The authors speculate that “one likely contributor to declining empathy is the rising prominence of personal technology and media use in everyday life” as well as “shrinking family sizes over time.” These reduce opportunities for siblings to develop empathy-related skills through daily interactions, thereby diminishing opportunities for empathy development.

See Sara H. Konrath, et al., “Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students over Time: A Meta-Analysis,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15:2 (2011), pp. 180–198

Validation Matters

A 2019 study examined the role of mothers’ responses to their adolescents’ conversations in influencing the degree to which the adolescents would disclose additional information. The study investigated different types of responses: negative (such as contempt, criticism, sadness), positive (such as humor, affection), interest (open-ended questions, positive nonverbal attention), validation (direct expressions of understanding), and neutral. The findings revealed that adolescents were more likely to engage in frequent disclosure when their mothers responded with validation and interest, compared to positive, negative, or neutral reactions. “Parental communication of validation and interest are particularly important in promoting adolescent disclosure in the context of parent-adolescent conversations.”

See Janice Disla, et al., “The Effect of Mothers’ Emotion-Related Responses to Adolescent Disclosures and Adolescent Perspective Taking on the Timing of Future Disclosures,” *Social Development* 28:3 (2019), pp. 657–673

Modes of Relationships in the Life of Joseph: A Time Line

YEAR: 2205 AGE: 6



Self-Sacrifice

Joseph shields his mother Rachel from Esau's evil intentions (Genesis 33:7; Rashi ad loc.).

YEAR: 2216 AGE: 17



Judging others negatively; talebearing and defamation

Joseph discerns certain negative behaviors in his brothers and reports them to their father (Genesis 37:2).



Insensitivity

Joseph shares his dreams—which predict his future greatness and leadership—with his brothers, fueling their jealousy and animosity (Genesis 37:5–11).



Failure to repair the relationship

The brothers throw Joseph into a pit and subsequently sell him into slavery. Joseph pleads with them for mercy, but they remain unmoved (Genesis 37:23–28, 42:21).

YEAR: 2217 AGE: 18



Charisma; Haughtiness and self-centeredness

Joseph revels in his success as the chief manager of Potiphar's affairs (Genesis 39:2–6; Rashi, ad loc.).



Loyalty; Integrity

Potiphar's wife becomes obsessed with Joseph's beauty and aggressively pursues him. Joseph rejects her advances (Genesis 39:7–12).

YEAR: 2227 AGE: 28

**Empathy**

Joseph notices the dejected mood of his fellow prisoners, asks them what is troubling them, and interprets their dreams for them (Genesis 40:6–19).

YEAR: 2229 AGE: 30

**Humility**

When summoned to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph attributes his wisdom and abilities to G-d (Genesis 41:16).

Solution-oriented**(not just “doing my job”)**

After interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph also offers his advice on how to prepare for the seven years of famine, which the dreams predict (Genesis 41:33–36).

YEAR: 2237 AGE: 38

**Restraint**

When the brothers come to Egypt, Joseph conceals his identity from them in order to move them through the process of repairing their broken relationship (Genesis 42:7–44:34).

YEAR: 2238 AGE: 39

**Generosity**

Joseph supports his brothers and their families throughout the years of famine (Genesis 47:12).

**Forgiveness**

Joseph repeatedly reassures his brothers that he bears no grudge against them and that he views all that he experienced to have been ordained from Above for a higher purpose (Genesis 45:5–7, 50:19–21).

**Vulnerability**

When Joseph finally reveals his identity to his brothers, he weeps openly. He embraces and comforts them, allowing them to recover from their overwhelming feelings of shame (Genesis 45:1–15).

YEAR: 2238–2255 AGE: 39–56

**Discretion**

For the entire seventeen years that Jacob lived in Egypt, Joseph never told him what his brothers did to him (Ramban, Genesis 45:27; *Daat Zekeinim Mibaalei HaTosafot*, ad loc., 48:1).

YEAR: 2309 AGE: 110

**Self-Sacrifice**

When Jacob passed away, he had Joseph promise to take his body out of Egypt to be buried in the Holy Land. But Joseph chose to remain in exile with his people to keep alive the promise that “G-d will remember you, and He will take you up from this land . . . and you will take my bones up with you” (Genesis 50:24–26).

Psychology References

Ameli M, Dattilio, F. (2013) Enhancing cognitive behavior therapy with logotherapy: Techniques for clinical practice. *Psychotherapy (Chicago, Ill.)*, 50(3), 387–91. doi.org/10.1037/a0033394.

Brown SL, Brown RM. (2015) Connecting prosocial behavior to improved physical health: Contributions from the neurobiology of parenting. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, Volume 55, 1–17. ISSN 0149-7634, doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2015.04.004.

Moccia L, et al. (2018) The experience of pleasure: A perspective between neuroscience and psychoanalysis. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 12:359. doi:10.3389/fnhum.2018.00359.

Nelson-Coffey S, et al. (2016) Do unto others or treat yourself? The effects of prosocial and self-focused behavior on psychological flourishing. *Emotion*. 16(6), 850–861. doi.org/10.1037/emo0000178.

Stavrova O, Ehlebracht D. (2015) A longitudinal analysis of romantic relationship formation: The effect of prosocial behavior. *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 6(5), 521–27. doi.org/10.1177/1948550614568867.

APPENDIX A—RELATIONSHIPS AND LONGEVITY



TEXT 16

The Story of Roseto

Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success*
(New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), p. 10

When Bruhn and Wolf first presented their findings to the medical community, you can imagine the kind of skepticism they faced. They went to conferences where their peers were presenting long rows of data arrayed in complex charts and referring to this kind of gene or that kind of physiological process, and they themselves were talking instead about the mysterious and magical benefits of people stopping to talk to one another on the street and having three generations under one roof.

Living a long life, the conventional wisdom at the time said, depended to a great extent on who we were—that is, our genes. It depended on the decisions we made—on what we chose to eat, and how much we chose to exercise, and how effectively we were treated by the medical system. No one was used to thinking about health in terms of *community*.

MALCOLM GLADWELL
1963–

British-Canadian journalist and writer. Gladwell was born in England and grew up in rural Ontario. He was a reporter and editor for *The Washington Post* and is now a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. His 4 books have all been on the *New York Times* bestseller list.



TEXT 17

Traits of Longevity

Rabbi Yisrael Alnaqua, *Menorat Hama'or*, ch. 20

וְכָל מִי שֶׁהוּא זֶהִיר בְּדַרְךְ אֶרֶץ וּמְעוֹרָב
 עִם הַבְּרִיּוֹת, זֹכֶה וְיֵאָרֵף יָמִים.
 כְּדִגְרָסִינּוּ . . . (מְגִלָּה כח, א) שֶׁאֵלוּ תַלְמִידָיו אָת
 רַבִּי נְחוּנְיָא בֶן הַקָּנָה: בְּמָה הֶאָרְכַּת יָמִים?
 אָמַר לָהֶם:
 מִיָּמֵי לֹא נִתְפַּבְּדְתִּי בְקָלוֹן חֲבֵרִי.
 וְלֹא עָלְתָה עַל מִטְּתִי קָלְלַת חֲבֵרִי.
 וְנִתְּרָן בְּמָמוֹנֵי הַיִּיתִי.

Those who are particular about respecting others and integrating with them will merit longevity.

As the Talmud (MEGILAH 28A) states: . . . Rabbi Nechunia ben Hakanah was asked by his disciples, “By what virtue have you reached old age?”

He replied:

“Never in life did I seek respect through the degradation of my fellow.

“Nor have I ever gone to bed harboring animosity toward another.

“And I have been openhanded with my money.”

RABBI YISRAEL ALNAQUA
D. 1391

Ethicist. A resident of Spain, Rabbi Yisrael Alnaqua studied under Rabbi Asher (Rosh) in Toledo. He is the author of *Menorat Hama'or*, a guide on ethics and piety. He was killed during the 1391 wave of pogroms in Spain.

APPENDIX B—RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING



TEXT 18

The Benefits of Connection

Sonja Lyubomirsky, *The Myths of Happiness*
(New York: Penguin Books, 2014), p. 63

Most of the time, social support won't make a problem disappear, but it can go a long way in helping us address the problem, mitigate it and lighten our emotional reaction to it.

In a clever study that supports this claim, researchers recruited volunteers who happened to be passing the base of a hill and were either alone or with a friend. Incredibly, those who were accompanied by a friend—especially a friend they were close to and knew a long time—judged the hill to be *less steep* than those who were alone.

Serving as a metaphor for the challenges of life . . . companions and confidants can make us feel that our problems and stresses are less steep as well.

SONJA LYUBOMIRSKY, PHD

Leading expert in positive psychology. Dr. Lyubomirsky is professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside. Originally from Russia, she received her PhD in social/personality psychology from Stanford University. Her research on the possibility of permanently increasing happiness has been honored with various grants, including a million-dollar grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. She has authored *The How of Happiness* and *The Myths of Happiness*.



TEXT 19

Two Are Better

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

טוֹבִים הַשְּׁנַיִם מִן הָאֶחָד
אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לָהֶם שְׂכָר טוֹב בְּעֵמְלָם.
כִּי אִם יִפְּלוּ הָאֶחָד יִקֶּים אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ,
וְאִילוּ הָאֶחָד שָׁיִפּוּל
וְאִין שְׁנֵי לְהַקְיָמוֹ.

Two are better than one,
Because they have good reward for their toil.
For if they fall, one will lift the other;
But woe to those who fall
And have no second one to lift them up.



TEXT 20

Introverts Included

Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener, *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), pp. 50–52

Throughout the day, we signaled the research participants with random alarms, after which they would complete a short mood survey and indicate the type of situation they were in: Were they alone, or with other people?

Initially, we suspected that introverts would be happier when they were alone and that extroverts would be happier when they were in a social setting. . . .

Flying in the face of our prediction, both extroverts and introverts had more positive emotions when they were with other people.

ED DIENER, PHD
1946–2021

Psychologist. Born in Glendale, California, Ed Diener received his PhD in psychology from the University of Washington and was a longtime professor at the University of Illinois. Nicknamed “Dr. Happiness,” he was an influential researcher on happiness, exploring the influences on well-being and methods of measuring it.

ROBERT
BISWAS-DIENER, PHD
1972–

Positive psychologist. Biswas-Diener is the son of Edward Diener and is an instructor at Portland State University. Biswas-Diener’s research focuses on income and happiness, culture and happiness, and positive psychology. Biswas-Diener’s research has led him to India, Greenland, Israel, Kenya, and Spain, and he has been called the “Indiana Jones of positive psychology.” He sits on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Happiness Studies* and the *Journal of Positive Psychology*.

APPENDIX C—TWO TYPES OF LOVE



TEXT 21

Who Can Love?

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya, Likutei Amarim*, ch. 32

וְהִנֵּה עַל יְדֵי קִיּוּם הַדְּבָרִים הַנִּזְכָּרִים לְעֵיל, לְהִיּוֹת גּוֹפוֹ נִבְּזָה
וְנִמְאָס בְּעֵינָיו, רַק שְׂמֻחַתוֹ תַּהְיֶה שְׂמֻחַת הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְבַדָּה, הֲרִי זֹ
דָרָה יִשְׂרָה וְקָלָה לָבֹא לִיְדֵי קִיּוּם מִצְוֹת "וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶה כְּמוֹךָ"
(וַיִּקְרָא יִט, יח) לְכֹל נֶפֶשׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, לְמַגְדוֹל וְעַד קָטָן . . .

בְּשִׂגְם שְׂפָלָן מִתְאַיְמוֹת וְאָב אָחָד לְכָלָנָה, וְלָכֵן
נִקְרָאוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחִים מִמֶּשׁ, מִצַּד שֶׁרֵשׁ
נֶפֶשָׁם בֵּה' אָחָד. רַק שֶׁהַגּוֹפִים מַחְלָקִים.

וְלָכֵן הָעוֹשִׂים גּוֹפִם עֶקֶר וְנֶפֶשָׁם טְפִלָּה, אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִיּוֹת
אַהֲבָה וְאַחֻוּהַ אֲמִתִּית בֵּינֵיהֶם, אֲלֵא הַתְּלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר לְבַדָּה.

Acting on the suggestion mentioned above—
to view one's bodily desires with scorn and
contempt and to find joy in the joy of the soul
alone—is a direct and easy way to fulfill the
commandment, "Love your fellow as yourself"
(LEVITICUS 19:18), toward every soul of
Israel, from the greatest to the smallest. . . .

For all souls are equal, and all have a single Father,
to the point that all of us are referred to as actual
siblings due to the source of our souls: the One
G-d. It is only our bodies that separate us.

Consequently, those who prioritize their bodies while considering their souls less significant cannot experience true love and brotherhood; they can only experience love contingent on nonessential factors.

APPENDIX D—GROWING INTO ESSENTIAL LOVE



TEXT 22A

Two Types of Love

Mishnah, Avot 5:16

כָּל אֶהְבָּה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, בְּטֵל דָּבָר, בְּטֵלָה אֶהְבָּה.

וְשֵׁאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר, אִינָהּ בְּטֵלָה לְעוֹלָם.

אִיזוֹ הִיא אֶהְבָּה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר? זֶה אֶהְבַּת אֲמִנוֹן וְתָמָר.

וְשֵׁאִינָהּ תְלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר? זֶה אֶהְבַּת דָּוִד וְיִהוֹנָתָן.

Any love that is dependent on something,
when the thing ceases, the love also ceases.

But a love that is not dependent
on anything never ceases.

What kind of love is dependent on something?

The love of Amnon for Tamar.

What kind of love is not dependent on
something? The love of David and Jonathan.



TEXT 22B

Origins Don't Matter

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson,
Torat Menachem 5733:3 (72), pp. 220–221

לְשׁוֹן הַמִּשְׁנָה - שֶׁהוּא "דָּבָר קָצֵר וְכוֹלֵל עֲנִינִים רַבִּים" הוּא:
 "אֶהְבֶּה שֶׁהִיא תְלוּיָה בְדָבָר", וְלֹא אֶהְבֶּה שֶׁבָּאָה מִדָּבָר.

כִּי, גַם כַּאֲשֶׁר הָאֶהְבָּה בָּאָה מִדָּבָר מְסוּיִים, אִין הַכֶּרֶחַ
 שֶׁתִּשְׁאַר תְּמִיד תְלוּיָה בְדָבָר שֶׁמִּמֶּנּוּ בָּאָה, אֶלָּא יְכוּל
 לִהְיוֹת שְׁלֵאֲחֵרִי שֶׁבָּאָה מִדָּבָר זֶה, נַעֲשִׂית מְצִיאֹת בְּפָנֶי
 עֲצָמָה, וְשׁוֹב אֵינָה תְלוּיָה בְדָבָר שֶׁמִּמֶּנּוּ בָּאָה . . .

זֶהוּ פְרוּשׁ מֵאֵמֶר הַמִּשְׁנָה . . . שֶׁאֶהְבֶּה "שֶׁאֵינָה תְלוּיָה
 בְּדָבָר", גַּם אִם הִיא בָּאָה מִדָּבָר מְסוּיִים, אֶבֶל עֲכָשְׁיו
 אֵינָה תְלוּיָה בּוֹ, הֵנָּה גַם כַּאֲשֶׁר בִּטֹּל הַדָּבָר שֶׁמִּמֶּנּוּ בָּאָה
 הָאֶהְבָּה, נִשְׁאַרְת הָאֶהְבָּה וְ"אֵינָה בִטֹּלָה לְעוֹלָם".

וְעַל זֶה מְבִיאָה הַמִּשְׁנָה . . . אֶהְבֵּת דָּוָד וִיהוֹנָדָן -
 הֵנָּה בְּתַחֲלָה הִיְתָה זֹאת אֶהְבָּה שֶׁבָּאָה מִדָּבָר מְסוּיִים וְדָבָר
 חִיצוֹנִי . . . אֶלָּא שֶׁאַחַר כֵּן נַעֲשִׂית אֶהְבָּה עֲצָמִית שֶׁאֵינָה
 תְלוּיָה בְדָבָר, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב: "וְנִפְּשׁ יְהוֹנָדָן נִקְשְׁרָה בְּנִפְּשׁ
 דָּוָד . . . בְּאֶהְבָּתוֹ אוֹתוֹ כְּנִפְּשׁוֹ" (שְׁמוּאֵל א, יח, א-ג).

The Mishnah's style is a brevity that contains numerous implications. In this case, it specifies love that's *dependent* on an external factor—as opposed to love that *arises* from an external factor.

That is because love may originate from a particular benefit, but it need not remain

dependent on that benefit. It could blossom into a love that is no longer dependent on the original cause that coaxed it into existence. . . .

This is the meaning of the Mishnah. . . . Love that is “not *dependent* on something”—even if it *originated* due to a specific benefit but is no longer dependent on it—this love “never ceases.” The original cause of the love may no longer exist, but the love remains.

That is why the Mishnah cites the case of . . . the love between David and Jonathan. Their mutual love originated due to external factors . . . but it developed into an essential love that was independent of all external factors. As it is described in the verse, “The *soul* of Jonathan was attached to the *soul* of David. . . . He loved him as his own *soul*” (1 SAMUEL 18:1–3).

APPENDIX E—ABRAHAM'S EMPATHY



TEXT 23A

Abraham and the Guests

Genesis 18:1-2

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה' בְּאֵלְנֵי מְמָרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב
פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם.

וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא, וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו,
וַיִּרָץ וַיִּרְץ לְקִרְאָתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֶרְצָה.

G-d appeared to him in the plains of
Mamre while he was sitting at the tent
entrance when the day was hot.

He lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three
men were standing beside him. He saw and
ran toward them from the tent's entrance,
prostrating himself to the ground.



TEXT 23B

Abraham's Cognitive Empathy

Rashi, Genesis 18:2

מהו "וַיֵּרָא" "וַיֵּרָא" שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים?

הָרֵאשׁוֹן כְּמִשְׁמָעוֹ.

וְהַשֵּׁנִי לְשׁוֹן הַבְּנָה - נִסְתַּכַּל שֶׁהֵיוּ נֹצְבִים בְּמָקוֹם

אֶחָד וְהַבֵּינָן שֶׁלֹּא הָיוּ רוֹצִים לְהִטְרִיחוֹ.

Why is "he saw" written twice in this passage?

The first is literal: he *noticed* the three individuals.

The second refers to discernment: he observed that they were standing in one spot and *discerned* that they did not wish to burden him.

APPENDIX F—WHEN TO SHARE



TEXT 24

Selective Sharing

Rabbi Yehudah ben Shmuel Hachasid, *Sefer Chasidim* 627

כְּתִיב: "לֵב יוֹדֵעַ מֵרַת נִפְשׁוֹ" (מִשְׁלֵי יד, י).

פְּשִׁיטָא שֶׁהֵלֵב יוֹדֵעַ!

אֲלָא מְגִיד שְׁפָעָמִים שְׂאִין לוֹ לְאַדָּם לְהַגִּיד צַעְרוֹ

לְאַחֵרִים אֲלָא יִתְפּוֹשׁ בְּלִבּוֹ. כְּגוֹן שֶׁאָדָם יוֹדֵעַ שְׂאוֹתָם

שֶׁבָּאִים אֶצְלוֹ אֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁים בְּצַעְרוֹ - אִם כֵּן לָמָּה

יגיד להם? אבל יגיד למי שיש לו חלק בצער. ועל זה נאמר "דאגה בלב איש - ישיחנה לאחרים".

"ובשמחתו לא יתערב זר" (משלי יד, י) - שאין לו חלק באוהה שמחה. כלומר, מי שאינו שומח ואינו חושש בשמחתו לא יספר לו שמחתו.

It is stated, "The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy" (PROVERBS 14:10). Is it not obvious that one's heart is aware of its own troubles?

Rather, this verse teaches us that, at times, we should keep our pain within our hearts instead of expressing it to others. When is that? When we know they are not concerned enough about our troubles to feel our pain. In that case, there is no point in sharing it with them. Instead, we should confide in someone who will actively share in our sorrow. It is specifically regarding such a confidant that our sages advised us to ease our worries by discussing them with someone.

"No stranger shares its joy" refers to those who do not actively participate in our joy. If we know that specific individuals will not be happy for our joy and will not care about it, we should not tell them about it.

APPENDIX G—JOSEPH'S EMOTIONAL EMPATHY



TEXT 25

Joseph and Benjamin

Rashi, Genesis 45:14

"וַיִּפֹּל עַל צַוְאֵרֵי בְנֵימִין אָחִיו וַיִּבְכֶּה" (בְּרֵאשִׁית
 מֵה, יד): עַל שְׁנֵי מִקְדָּשׁוֹת שֶׁעֲתִידִין לְהִיּוֹת
 בְּחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל בְּנֵימִין וְסוֹפָן לְחָרֵב.

"וּבְנֵימִין בָּכָה עַל צַוְאֵרָיו" (שָׁם): עַל מִשְׁכַּן שִׁילָה
 שֶׁעֲתִיד לְהִיּוֹת בְּחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף וְסוֹפוֹ לְחָרֵב.

"Joseph fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept" (GENESIS 45:14)—for the two Temples, destined to stand in Benjamin's territory, which would ultimately be destroyed.

"Benjamin wept on his neck" (IBID.)—for the Tabernacle at Shiloh, destined to be located in Joseph's territory, which would ultimately be destroyed.

APPENDIX H—POSITIVE EMPATHY



TEXT 26

Moses and Aaron

Exodus 4:14

הֲלֹא אֶהְרֹן אָחִיךָ הַלֵּוִי, יִדְעֶתִי כִּי דַבֵּר יִדְבֹר הוּא,
וְגַם הִנֵּה הוּא יֵצֵא לִקְרָאתְךָ, וְרָאֶה וְשָׂמַח בְּלִבּוֹ.

What about your brother, Aaron the
Levite? I know he will surely speak; behold,
he is going out toward you, and when he
sees you, he will rejoice in his heart.



TEXT 27

The Ultimate Romantic Wish

Midrash, *Shir Hashirim Rabah* 8:1

"מִי יִתְנַהֵךְ כְּאָח לִי" (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ח, א):

בְּאֵי זֶה אָח?

כְּמִי לְהִבְלֹ? כִּי הֲרֵג לְהִבְלֹ, שְׂנֵאָמֵר:
"וַיִּקָּם כִּיזוֹ אֶל הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ" (בְּרֵאשִׁית ד, ח).

אֵלָּא כִּי־שָׂמַעְתָּ לְיִצְחָק? יִשְׂמַעְתָּ שׁוֹנֵא לְיִצְחָק.

אֵלָּא כְּעֵשָׂו לְיַעֲקֹב? הֲרֵי נֵאָמֵר:

"וַיִּשְׂטֹם עֵשָׂו אֶת יַעֲקֹב" (שָׁם כז, מא).

SHIR HASHIRIM RABAH

A midrashic text and exegetical commentary on the book of Song of Songs. This Midrash explicates this biblical book based on the principle that its verses convey an allegory of the relationship between G-d and the people of Israel. It was compiled and edited in the Land of Israel during the 6th century.

אָלֶּא פֶּאַחֵי יוֹסֵף לְיוֹסֵף? שׁוֹנְאֵין הָיָו אוֹתוֹ,
 שְׁנֵאָמַר: "וַיִּקְנָאוּ בּוֹ אָחָיו" (שָׁם לז, יא) . . .
 הָיָו אוֹמֵר כְּיוֹסֵף לְבְנֵימִין, שְׁאַהֲבוּ בְּלִבּוֹ . . .
 מִטְּשָׁה וְאַהֲרֹן, שְׁנֵאָמַר: "וַיִּלְךָ וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ בְּהַר
 הָאֶלְקִים וַיִּשָּׁק לוֹ" (שְׁמוֹת ד, כז).

"If only you were to me like a brother!"
 (SONG OF SONGS 8:1).

Like *which* brother?

Like Cain toward Abel? Cain murdered Abel!
 As it is stated, "Cain rose up against Abel
 and killed him" (GENESIS 4:8).

Like Ishmael toward Isaac?
 Ishmael harbors hatred for Isaac!

Like Esau toward Jacob? But it is stated,
 "Esau loathed Jacob" (GENESIS 27:41)!

Like Joseph's brothers toward Joseph?
 They hated him! As it is stated, "His brothers
 envied him" (GENESIS 37:11). . . .

We must conclude that it is like Joseph toward
 Benjamin, for he loved him with his heart. . . .

And like Moses and Aaron. As it says, "Aaron
 went and met Moses on the mount of G-d,
 and he kissed him" (EXODUS 4:27).

